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Poetry (Amer.)

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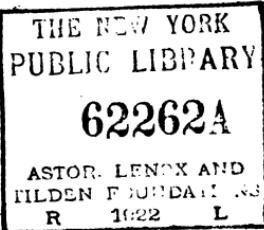
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HAPPY CHILDREN AND OTHER VERSES

BY
M. W. Murray

NEW YORK
FRANK F. LOVELL
1920





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BY
FRANK F. LOVELL

TO
My Mother
WHOSE LOVE, FAITH,
AND
DEVOTION
TO HER CHILDREN,
I STRIVE TO EMULATE
TOWARDS MINE

22 X 169

HAPPY CHILDREN

THE HAPPY CHILDREN

There were five children who owned the world,
The whole world,
A golden world,
Five happy children who loved the world,—
The world was at their feet.

They loved the sea, they loved the fields,
The fragrant fields,
The warm fields,
Daisies and thistles in playing fields
And all the world was sweet.

The forest of pines blew overhead,
Where squirrels fled,
And the children said
“Let’s pretend to be Indians red
In feathers and wampum clad.”

They played on the sand by the good blue sea
They sailed the sea,
They swam the sea;
They paddled and rowed on the laughing sea
And all their days were glad.

They followed the wood paths endlessly
Where they could see
Importantly,
Small homes of ant and wasp and bee
And thought themselves very wise.

Taught by the rain and wind and sun
Much quiet fun,
They loved the sun
Those happy children of the sun
Beneath Cotuit skies.

CYNTHIA

Where close-cropped turf elastic yields
Beneath her chestnut's feet
She wings the long, brown, friendly fields
With flying, rhythmic beat.

Where silver ripples, cool and still
Break at her rushing dive
She wakes the placid depth, until
The drowsy sea's alive.

Where challenging the target stands
“Nay, who will be so bold!”
She laughs, and speeds with slender hands
Her arrows to the gold.

Earth, sea and air, she holds them all
Triumphant in fee,
Nor knows how close they have in thrall
Her Maiden Spirit free.

MY CHILDHOOD

A happy child, I wandered on the sand,
Watching the ripples slip along the beach
Running light-footed, to be out of reach,
When one, more bold, came rushing up the land.
I saw the gulls wheel, sparkling 'gainst the blue
Lay on the bank where pines spread their soft mist
Against a peacock sea; and I would list
To whip-poor-will or thrush the summer through;
Or, floating lightly, 'neath a sky of stars
In phosphorescent waves I'd lie and see
The fireflies at play. Oh! Dawn of years!
Oh! Children playing near the deodars,
May your glad sunrise as enchanted be
As mine,—that still in golden hue appears.

TO JEAN

Your moods from petulant to winsome run
Where child and dawning maiden are at play
Like whim and frolic of an April day,
Or pulsing radiance 'neath a cloud-crossed sun.
Puck's sister now, all twinkling mirth and fun,
Now Rosalind's of witching yeas and nays,
Grave Martha's next, deep-skilled in household ways,
Then garden-wise, you rival Ceres. None
Of all the pretty sisterhood but lends
Some trait or fancy, wilful, sage or sweet.
You dance through sunny days on happy feet
And linger wistful when glad daylight ends.
May this dear prelude set your lifelong theme
In harmony of wit, work, happiness and dream.

ALISOUN

My dainty, elfin, fair-haired maid
 Of wayward mood,
By love and loving only, swayed
 To bidden good.

A word, a tone, a gesture e'en
 By love inspired,
Will wing her footsteps, light her keen
 Spirit untired.

The dullest task has secret charm
 When love's astir.

But, love away, some hidden harm
 Makes dark from fair.

A fairy poem tripped along
 Her baby tongue,
With love as simple as a song
 A bird has sung;

For she would paint the bluest blue
 Her heart could yield,
Would pluck the prettiest flower that grew
 In her love's field.

Her searching lips, more tutored art
 Surpassing far,
Rippled, "You heart, you lovely heart,
 You sweetheart star."

May love forever be her star,
And ever kind,
Leading her up, leading her far,
Life's best to find.

Until unwearied, wise, alert
Early or late,
She reach, still loving and unhurt
Death's golden gate.

BEATRICE

A rush, a whirr, a laughing shout
Of childish glee.

Now what is Beatrice about?
I'd better see.

Is there a dragon-fly to chase?
Rabbit to follow?
She's flashing off with merry face,
Swift as a swallow.

Or who will fish with hook and line?
Why Beatrice.
And who will catch the gold-fish fine?
Just hers the bliss.

If fun's afoot in field or wood
I'll find her there,
With stocking torn, and fallen hood,
And tangled hair.

Has she a treasure David claims?
All generous now,
She yields it. Must he win at games?
She'll show him how.

From mood to mood, from deed to deed
She flits and flies
A-wing for change, her dearest need,
Some new surprise.

Bright Spirit, vivid, loving, sweet,
Happy, intense,
May life so lead your dancing feet
Through its immense

Great round of change and wonder, you
Well satisfied,
Shall live each best experience through,
Not one denied.

TO DAVID

My little son with tousled head,
Small nose a-tilt and wilful eyes,
Swift, flitting, will-o'-wispish mite,
What are the rules will make you wise?

The selfishness that lies behind
Your little funny naughtiness,
The gallantry that bade you pause
And blow me, through shut door, a kiss,

The courage and the manfulness
Which taught you, when you saw my pain
Was greater for your hurt than yours,
And bade you cry, "All well adain!"

Where may they lead you, where indeed?
What are the lessons on your way?
What are the pitfalls for your feet
Along the dusty dreary way?

How can I arm you to endure?
How can I give you vision free,
For which to live, for which to die,
To follow through eternity?

Shall Life or I your teacher be?
May I be teacher too, with Life?
I feel so wise with you so young,
Though I'm a novice in the strife.

Dear David, one thing I have learned
I would that you could learn from me,—
Until that tyrant self of yours
Is conquered, you will not be free.

Until your hands are on the reins
Of your own will, you cannot rule.
Till you are master of yourself
You are the world's toy, and its fool.

When you can open morning eyes
Upon the beauty of the day
And say "My work's before me plain,"
And, "I am nothing, nothing," say,

Then all the flood of loveliness,
Of shining peace, joy, hope, delight,
Will rush to fill that empty space,
Making your "nothing" one great light.

I know this, dear, but how to say
The words so that your soul shall hear?
Ah! How indeed? No words, no words,
Only Love's voice, My Very Dear.

THE ARRIVAL

I see them at last,—the four little blue-clad figures
Waiting a trifle wistfully, sitting a-row and safe.
They catch my smile as the train hurries into the
station
And with patter of light feet they rush down the
platform
To meet me as I alight, when the train, creaking,
stops.
They gather close, caressing, eager, with happy
cries,
“Dear old Mummy, Sweet woman! How good you’ve
come!”
And I settle my wings around them like a glad bird

THE SHADOW COUSINS

We've got your pictures on the wall,
We've got you in our hearts,
We wish the sea were not so wide,
Whenever summer starts.

We talk about the yellow sand,
The gold and silver shells,
The fiddlers and the horseshoe crabs
Of which Grandmother tells.

We want to fish with you for scup,
And paddle, "wade," you say
And sail and swim and row and climb
In the Cotuit way.

We want to run along the beach
And feel the slippy sand,
And dig deep holes, to watch the sea
Come creeping to our hand.

And will you show us arbutus
And ladies' slippers too
And wintergreen, and Charlotte's lace
Where all the fairies grew?

And may we join your treasure hunt
With ribbons streaming wide,
And find the hundred pretty toys
That Grandmother will hide?

We wish, Oh! How we wish that soon
Your faces we might see!
Beloved Shadow Cousins,
Victoria and Lee.

THE BELOVED BLOSSOM

A laughing fairy with rainbow wings
Was caught in a cup of pearl,
Above it Titania waved her wand
And out stepped a little girl.

Her golden curls like petals frame
Her mischievous, dimpled face
Like a yellow rose, or a daffodil
Perfumed with love and grace.

And all the fancies the fairies have
Are met in her baby smile,
For she knows the most enchanting ways
To capture and beguile.

Her words flit merry as humming-birds
That dart into every flower,
The flowers of all the loving hearts
That weave her guardian bower.

There's not a caress nor a pretty way
Whose secret she doesn't know,
She wins a kiss for her roughish pranks
And a toy for her tiny woe.

Precious and cherished, she spreads around
The fragrance of childhood sweet;
So I send this little tender word
The Beloved Blossom to greet.

THE HAPPY SONG

I spread my wings through the arch of Spring,
And call to the birds, "Let us sing, sing, sing!
The Winter is gone with its grieving dark,
Come with us, Robin and Thrush and Lark,
Sing in our choir of joy, joy, joy,
Crying to every girl and boy
To join in our song and our glad free hearts,
Forgetting the world and its dusty marts;
Only singing o'er heather and thorn,
We are glad, glad, glad that we were born."

There are the flowers with peeping smile
Gilding the meadows for mile on mile.
There with a laugh comes the strong blue sea
Carolling, dashing, mad and free.
The whole world is singing an infinite song,
Forgetful of sighing Winter's wrong.
Our hearts are filled and overflow
With our joy in the beautiful things we know.
And we sing till eve from early morn,
We are glad, Oh! Glad that we were born.

Glad that this wonderful world is ours,
Wreathed in its garment of leaves and flowers;
Glad of the sun, and glad of the trees,
Of the birds and butterflies and bees,
Glad that the Night has wed the Moon,
That the sweet stars shine, that May melts to June,
That the sky is blue and the clouds are white,
That bright day fades into tender night,
That gentle night will wake with the morn,
We are glad, so glad that we were born.

We follow the wind for hours on end,
And every coppice holds a friend.
A squirrel whisks to the high oak spray
Chattering, laughing, he seems to say:
“Aren’t you glad you have found my nest,
Glad to be out on your wild-wood quest,
Glad that the pheasant roams in the bush,
That the little rabbits their noses push
Through the cool tall grass by the waving corn
Aren’t you glad, glad, glad that you were born?”

Song bubbles up from our merry lips
Sweet as honied store that the wild bee sips
From columbine gay in the forest glade,
Where all last night the fairies played
In the shadow and glimmer under the leaves,
Which the soft night wind in patterns weaves
Like a delicate carpet of light and shade
For Titania’s dainty footprints laid,
And the Fairy Herald winds his horn
To join our refrain,—we’re glad we were born.

“We are glad, we are glad, we are glad,” we sing,
“That sullen Winter has yielded to Spring.
Glad we may gather the primrose pale
That pours its gold over hill and vale.
Glad that the brooks are all set free
To add their murmuring minstrelsy
To our joyous voices that sound so shrill
Up the valley and over the hill,
Till in one chorus we greet the morn,
We are glad, Oh, Glad! that we were born.”

A YOUNG BIRD SINGS

Over the world, around the world
I speed on my pinions light,
Up the world and down the world
Then home again at night.

Fair is the world, sweet is the power
To flutter like wind-blown foam.
But Oh! How dear is the evening hour
That brings me safely home!

SECRETS

*When the sun is shining, glad and strong and bright,
The merry birds are happy and singing in the light,
All the flowers are dancing, rabbits frisk about
Because the night is ended and now the sun is out.
When I see the sunbeams slipping through the trees
Like steep cobweb stairways that waver in the
breeze,*

*When I see the golden light spreading everywhere,
Round the yellow buttercups, in the Baby's hair,
(Whisper.) Then I'm the sun!*

*When I feel the rain come brushing in my face
Soft as Mother's fichu, that's all of filmy lace;
When the jolly raindrops glisten on the leaves,
And every friendly robin hides beneath the eaves;
If the sun comes laughing across the summer shower
There will be a rainbow brighter than a flower,
All the drooping blossoms lift their heads again
Because they were so thirsty they wanted it to rain.
(Whisper.) Then I'm the rain!*

*When I hear the wind go rushing in the trees
Rising from a whisper, spreading to a breeze,
Shrieking to a tempest, howling in a storm,
And everybody's indoors, safe and snug and warm;
When I hear it rattling at the window pane
Blowing all the leaves about, dashing, wet with rain,
Shouting down the chimney, wailing round the door,
Creeping in at all the cracks, cold across the floor,
(Whisper.) Then I'm the wind!*

When I see the starlight shine into the room
The high old trees are shadowy like giants in the
gloom;
The sky's so steep and far away, and deep and blue
and all
That even if I climbed it most likely I should fall;
The stars are clear and quiet, I think they under-
stand
How much I'd like to touch them, that's why I
stretch my hand;
I watch them and love them and listen to their song
And though the night's not sleepy it doesn't seem
too long,

(Whisper.) For *I'm* the stars!

A CHILD'S SUPERSTITION

The new moon laughed at me to-night
From filmy web of cloud,
And caught my heart up in her light
When I laughed back and bowed.

"For Luck!" I cried, and nodded thrice.
I thought she nodded too.
"I've Luck," she said, "For those I love
And there's a bit for you.

You know you mustn't watch for Luck
But just be glad and good."
"I know," I said. Like a good child
I whispered that I would.

So all this month I'm honour bound
To be as glad as glad,
And good as good too, that I've found
Easy, if you're not sad.

If I can keep my spirit light
Until the month is past,
There's sure to be some luck around,
'Twill come to me at last.

THE PENNY WHISTLE

Wistful I wandered through the glade and up the hill,
The sky was near and shadowy, the Whispering
Trees were still,

When I picked up a penny whistle.
Just a tiny plaything dropped by a running child,
I blew a slow breath through it; it sounded sweet
and wild,
So I kept the penny whistle.

Sometimes when I am lonely or sad and full of doubt,
And life seems such a cruel thing that tosses one
about,

I take out my penny whistle,
And play a little simple tune of sun and wind and
flowers
Or the sea that sings along the sand through dreamy
summer hours,
Then I'm glad because of my whistle.

It's such a slender trifle to comfort a sad heart,
Yet there's something magic in its tone that takes
away the smart.

So I cherish my penny whistle.
I wish that I could let you hear the pleasant trills and
mild,
The sort of things you heard perhaps when you were
but a child
Come from my penny whistle.

If it could give you comfort or drive your blues
away

I'd play for you and play for you through all the
livelong day

Tunes on my penny whistle.

But perhaps you'd only laugh and stop your ears and
say "Enough"!

Those jingling, tinkling melodies are very idle stuff,
Why! It's only a penny whistle"!

So I think I'll keep it hidden and softly take it out
When I am quite alone with stars and brooks and
birds about

Then play on my penny whistle.

And starlight and twittering birds and murmuring
water soon

In lilting happy chorus will mingle with the tune
Of my merry little whistle.

And all the petty teasing things that worried me
and vexed

Or filled with contradictions that troubled me, per-
plexed

Will fly at the sound of my whistle,
Till back through pleasant twilight groves and
friendly forest ways

I'll linger, light of heart again, and full of loving
praise

For my Comrade, Penny Whistle.

THE GIFT

Maxoe sent a gift to me
 Of inwoven pearls.
What can I return to her,
 Sweetest of all girls?

I have not a pearl to send,
 Not an amethyst.
Would a wreath of roses do
 If each one I kissed?

FAITHLESS PYRRHA

Late last night my Pyrrha said
 She was all my own.
With the morning light I found
 All her fancies flown.

Will they flutter to the hall
 Where Almoethes sits?
If they do, my heart will break
 Into little bits.

COMPUNCTION

Why should I praise the sunshine in your curls
 When over there,
Beloved eyes are closed forever, 'neath
 Blood-dabbled hair?

THE TEA PARTY

Oh! Clotho, haste your tiring!
The light of afternoon
Is slowly fading overhead,
We are expected soon.

If I am not at Myrrha's
When Clermines arrives,
I'll die at least a hundred deaths
And lose a hundred lives!

DOUBT

I heard the swallows' twitter
Drop down from out the blue
Like dainty, frail love-letters
That come to me from you.

I vow the swallows' twitter
Will just as lasting prove
As these deceptive missives
That tell me of your love.

CHEATED

Spring threw its beauties at me for a day
Then turned and laughing, tripped lighfoot
away.
And Love glanced at me with a starlike eye
Then flew as fast away as he could fly.

HAPPY GOATHERD

Glaxo, lead your goats this way
Down the stony hill,
Sit with me among the ferns
By this little rill.

Show me your philosophy.
Why are you content?
What has made your flute to be
Sweetly eloquent?

“My content no secret hides.
What have I to wish
While my flock lush pasture crop
From their thorny dish?

“While my heart is safe and sound
In dear Phryne’s hands
Who will keep it close and warm
In love’s steadfast bands?”

DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE

Rheta, which of all the youths
With ambrosial curls
Has first place within your heart
Queen of lovely girls?

I am old and desolate,
Do not take amiss
That I thus should question you,
Come! Which is it? Miss?

“None of all those foppish youths
Has my heart in thrall,
Since you first appeared to me,
You have had it all.”

A COQUETTE

If Sapho vowed her heart to me
Ah! Naught would be more sweet.
By what return of troth could I
The little mischief meet?

I know she does not want my heart
Forever and a day.
A day, perhaps, but after that
She'd throw it quite away.

Perhaps my head would do as well
With wealth of wistful rhyme,
Would catch her heart and keep it mine
A little longer time.

HOPELESS LOVER

Phyllis puts her thirsty lips
To my silver cup,
Laughs before a drop she sips,
Looking slyly up.

How I wish my heart had turned
Into fragrant wine
E'er for her my spirit burned
With this pain divine!

Surely then my brimming cup
From the jar had dipped
All my love, and she perforce
Of my soul had sipped.

PAN'S PIPES

Shrilling through a birchen grove
 Mad and merry, joyous, free,
Trilled the happy pipes of Pan
 Calling, calling me.

Every mischievous intent,
 Every fancy, every whim
Of my disobedient heart
 Answered, answered him.

Under skies of blue and rose
 Far from cities built by man
In that grove of white and gold
 I will dance with Pan.

Cornish, N. H., October 11, 1919

A LAUGHING SONG

I will go down into the fields with Love.
I will go down into the laughing fields
In search of treasure that the cowslip yields,
Cowslip, that tosses gold where'er we rove.

There Love and I will heap our cowslip balls
To prove by battle who has greater heart,
He with his wiles and witcheries and art,
Or I who hear and follow where love calls.

But if I vanquish all-desired Love
I shall deprive myself by his undoing.
For Love defeated, who shall go a'-wooing?
And who, unwooed, can life's enchantment prove?

But quick unvanquished Love shall conquer me,
And by that triumph leave me sadder still
Than if by cowslip showers I could kill
My tyrant dear, and loveliest enemy.

So I, perforce, must check a skilful cast
And pray that to Love's volleys I succumb,
Till back returning, Love and I shall come
And vow our first affray shall be our last.

SUGGESTED BY SEEING PINK HAWTHORN IN THE GREEN PARK

There are hawthorns in the valley
And the mist climbs up the hill.
Oh! There's fragrance in the valley by the brook!
And I'm off with wind and weather,
We will search for Spring together,
For she's hiding in the valley. Look! Oh, Look!

Underneath the hazel bushes
Where the tossing bluebells grow
And the sunbeams peep and frolic with the shade.
Sunbeams run! and we will follow
Swifter than the flight of swallow,
Through the valley and the flower-painted glade.,

Can you say how glad your heart is
When the hawthorn is in bloom
And the bubbling blossom perfumes all the air?
Let us greet the Spring together
For you hold my heart in tether
To my love for you, and Oh! That love is fair.

HOME

My home is not shut in by four strait walls
Nor bounded by one broad horizon line;
But where my heart rejoices, nearer God,
Beneath the changing sky is home of mine.

ALL SAINTS' DAY REVERIE

From the pale sorrow of November's birth
I dream myself away into the past,
My cherished hoard of moments, visions, joys,
To swell the fire of remembrance, cast.

The purple sea is spread 'neath August haze,
Around me rise the fragrant friendly pines,
The perfume mingles with the burning sands
And poignant sweetness from the wild grape vines.

My feet sink slipping in the yielding path
That marks my lingering progress through the wood.
My brushing skirts catch in the sharpened twigs
Of teasing scrub-oak. In this spot I stood

A thousand times to watch the white clouds pass
Across the feathered branches overhead.
I hear the mad sweet riot of the thrush
Where in azalea shade he's thicketed.

I cross the dyke. Above, man's fostering hand
Has set the bogs whose glistening berries soon
Will dot with crimson the green glossy leaves.
Below, the marsh is spread. From June to June.

An ever-changing medley of delight
Colours and flowers 'neath the varied skies
Garlanded now with roses wild and sweet,
Now, circling golden-rod's bright torches rise.

My path strikes on through tangled undergrowth
That half obliterates its purposed way
Till sudden there's a break, a level space,
All my companion trees are fallen away.

Below me lies the sweetest landlocked bay
God in his pleasure ever thought for man.
Blue, whispering, endlessly serene
Beneath the sky. Or ever Time began

It lay there musing, and when Time is done
It still will lie in peace. Here then an hour
I'll throw me down among the springy vines
Of creeping scarlet crowberry. This dower

Of beauty and of promise shall be mine.
I'll float above the ripples like the wind
And learn the secret of its murmured song.
Or like the flashing silver fishes, finned,

I'll search its farthest inlets. Here I find
The gentle spot where sheltered most secure
With all my dearest fancies I might dwell
Out of the world beside this influence pure.

This tiny acre would be all my need,
A sack of meal and water from my well,
A thatch against the storm and winter wind
Here lost, and doubly safe, content I'd dwell.

The all-unanswered riddle of the years
Would here unravel, and my eyes would see
Truth simple as the dawn. All hopes, all fears
Would fall away in wise simplicity.

A dream, a dream, I dream a pretty dream,
And as from all fair dreams I must awake.
The night is flying under English skies,
Beneath dear English skies my day will break.

RESTLESSNESS

My heart is full of music,
My world is full of song,
And I would be off to the tall woods
To dwell there long.

I'd throw away the comfort
Silken and subtle enough
That steals the gold from the sunset
And live life rough.

Rough and easy and magic
Under the eyes of the stars,
Friend of Aquila, Orion,
And great god Mars.

Perhaps a nymph or a dryad,
Or sister of dusky Pan,
Part myth and partly spirit
Of wild-wood clan.

Drowsing under a pine-tree
When noon burns fragrant and still,
While I see the white gulls circle,
Hear song-sparrow trill.

Watching the bees and the squirrels
Busy and clever and wise
With all the wisdom of children
And God in the skies.

Drifting at night in the shallows,
Warm from the heat of the day,
Till body is melted to spirit
Both floating away.

Floating up to the starlight
Out of the misty sea,
Till turned to a cloud or a moonbeam
At last I'm free.

ARETHUSA

Clematis climbed to the top of a tree,
Climbed to the top of the black yew tree,
And hung in its dusky shade.
When summer loosened her filmy gown,
Foaming and white it came rushing down,
And a bubbling waterfall made.

I'm perfectly certain that Arethuse,
Tired of Sicily's grays and blues,
And spying a chance to be free
From Alpheus' all too loving arms,
Has fled with her beauty and laughing charms
To dwell in my garden with me.

And so when I see the white clouds play,
Beyond the dashing clematis spray
I watch for the god, lest he
Turned into mist should come searching here
For the dainty maiden he loves so dear,
The Nymph that he longs to see.

It wouldn't surprise me a single bit
If some soft night when the small bats flit
Through the shadows under the stars,
I entertain great company
Under the broad old walnut tree
By the feathery deodars.

I mean to watch so quiet and still,
If I'm very patient perhaps he will
Come for his Love one night,
And in the sweetness and silence here,
Perhaps her heart will awake and hear
Till she yields and follows his flight.

And when next morning I run to see
Clematis splashing down from the tree,
Of course I'll find she's fled.
Alpheus' prayer will be answered at last,
The Lovers' Rubicon happily passed,
Her first "I love you," said.

I'll always believe the wilful maid
Hides in the sheltering yew-tree's shade,
Till she and Alpheus go
Flitting as suddenly away
As the crest of a wave in rainbow spray,
And then, why then I'll know!

A VALENTINE

The year has run its golden round
Maid Spring comes dancing in
With sigh of shower,
And smile of flower,
And blackbird's merry din.

The elm-tree flings its tasseled twigs
Across the April blue.
My heart's a-wing
With songs of Spring
For you, my dear, for you.

AQUARELLE

Raindrops in the hawthorn twigs
 Black and cold and dripping,
Just this lazy little wind
 Soon will set them slipping.

Garden's like a cup of mist
 Rimmed about with trees
Tall and sad and limp and wet
 In the listless breeze.

Lilac buds are shivering,
 Almond blossom's shy,
Robin's hidden in the yew
 Half afraid to fly.

Thrush is scolding at the damp,
 Pussy creeps forlorn.

Garden beds are like a swamp,
 Not a blossom born.

Snowdrop tries to hide away
 From the murky chill,
Wishes it had stayed at home
 'Neath its little hill.

Violet and daffodil
 Last week looked so gay,
Three whole days of sleet and mist
 Frightened them away.

What a time of mirk and gloom!
 Desolation drear!
You can guess without more words
 February's here.

SPRING SNOW

The garden's full of daffodils and crocuses and prim-
roses,
Frocks purple, white and yellow, in a merry dancing
row;
They're nodding to each other and pretending, "bal-
ance partners!"
When suddenly a cold wind has turned Spring
shower to snow.

Each crocus has a frilled cap of lacy snow-white
crystals,
The daffodils are draped in dainty star-embroidered
robes,
The primroses are snuggled under heaps of fluffy
snow-flakes,
Their yellow faces shining through like lighted golden
globes.

A snow-storm in the Winter's not half so soft and
pretty
As now, when Spring-time's running round the
garden with a cheer.
I love to see what fun the flowers are having in the
flurry
And know that spite of chill and frost the Summer'll
soon be here.

VILLANELLE

Winter's knocking at the door.,
With the sound a face peeps out,
Autumn pleads for one day more.

"There are apples on the floor,
Leaves are scattered all about."
Autumn pleads for one day more.

"Just to-day the West wind tore
My cloud curtains." With a pout
Autumn pleads for one day more.

"Come! You'd wait till Spring before
Going! You forget no doubt,
Winter's knocking at the door!"

DECEMBER

A robin sings at sunset,
A ring-dove coos at noon,
An owl's cry at midnight
Floats shrill beneath the moon.

A snow-drop in the morning
Droops bell of greenish pearl.
The daisies' pink-tipped petals
Their silken fringe unfurl.

Slight songs, and swift impressions,
New flowers, yet so old;
They bind my heart to England
With welded chain of gold.

AWAKENING

I heard a chaffinch singing in the dawn
While my half-drowsy sense delicious hung
'Twixt sleep and waking. The refrain he flung
Across the sounding-board of silvered lawn
Was "Spring-time, Spring, Spring, Spring-time."

So he wove
A spell in every shade of melody
Exultant, "Spring, sweet Spring, glad Spring-time!"

He
Made coloured patterns on a theme of love.
I would not change his dear ecstatic song
For richest setting of orchestral scope.
The morning's promise and the day's best hope
To that triumphant orison belong.
May "Spring, fair Spring-time" echo down the
years
Promise and exhortation to my ears.

DAYBREAK

Exultant Blackbird leads the hosts of song
That challenge prison night to set day free;
And my glad heart upspringing, light as he
With silent concord joins the matin throng.
From tree to tree the chorus runs along
And back and forth in woven harmony
Melodious iteration, ceaseless, free
“Haste! Warder night, your vigil is too long!”
Then timid morn, a-peep between the trees
Listens with rosy blush her lovers’ praise.
“Sweet Love,” they sing, “Fair Dawn thy beams
 up-raise
And bless with radiance thy votaries.”
So, slipping down the stairway of the sky
She greets each Lord of woodland melody.

THE LITTLE TRAINS IN ENGLAND

Sometimes when I perforce must flash along
These swift, great, lordly highroads of the rail,
I pass some hamlet in a winding vale.
With rush of platforms vanishing ere long—
A cobweb center for the gathered throng,
Where, sleepy, waiting for their leisured path,
The little trains, the trains old wisdom hath
Taught all the wayside secrets, ages long,
Wait to be off for haunts of thyme and rue,
And bright June roses wet with early dew;
Old terraced gardens; gables, ivy-crowned;
Gray towers that send their chimes through miles
 around
With peaceful message to the country-side
Through the heart's heart of England, deep and wide.

LLANDRINDOD

Llandrindod cradled 'mid a hundred hills,
You turn your laughing dimples to the sky.
A rosy favoured, happy Prince you lie,
Soothed by the murmur of your myriad rills;
Unlearned in strife and innocent of ills
Your most lamenting note a Zephyr's sigh;
In verdure mantled, your bright destiny
Crowns you with flowers, and your chalice fills
With flowing health, which you in regal mood
Pour generous, unstinting to our need;
But most for our poor world-sick souls your meed
Of light and beauty rush in bounteous flood.
We come in beggared plight your aid to sue,
Returning laden rich with gifts from you.

AT CRAVEN ARMS

These are the gifts that were given to me
At Craven Arms in the Shropshire hills.
An open door where I could see
Geraniums a-row on the window sills.

Old oak tables polished and black,
And high oak panelling, polished too,
Where Darby or Hobden leans his back
When there's no more work, for the day, to do;

Two lovers leaning over a gate;
Children lightfoot on their way from school
Shaken by laughter and fearless of fate,
Free for an hour from precept and rule;

Blue hills under cloud-painted sky;
Gray old church brooding quiet and dim,
O'er its loving pride in the boy who could fly
And dare the sun, till bright Death dared him—

Rambling castle of high romance,
Smoky beams of the banquet hall,
Revelry, music, jest and dance
Knights and ladies and dwarfs and all,

When life was rude but life was gay
And strong and fierce in that lawless time,
This window perchance heard a roundelay,
A lover paced here while he sought a rhyme,

And here at the top of the tower tall
Are grooves where the boiling oil was poured
Down on the heads of the foemen, all
The savage and reckless robber hoarde.

A lingering walk through a pleasant lane
Sweet with the fragrance of clover fields;
These are the gifts I may find again,
These part of the magic that Shropshire yields.

RESTORATION

To I. K. W.

Over the hills on the top of the world,
Over the high hills brushing the sky,
We have been wandering heart in heart,
Lingering, you and I.

Caught in a shower of falling gold,
Sun on the leaves that came fluttering down,
Breathlessly watching the patterned hills,
Crimson, yellow and brown;

Hearing the dry leaves sing where our feet
Rustled among the wind-gathered heaps,
Tracing the river's green-foliaged curves
Its eddying shallows and deeps;

Fed by a handful of treasure-trove
Smooth glistening chestnuts that fell at our feet,
Or apples silvered by dewy grass
Luscious, and crisp and sweet;

Lifted above our daily round
Holding the wisdom of Time in fee
Stirred with delight at a world new-born
Created for you and me.

We have been happy here, you and I,
Life's taken on a quite different hue
Through the magic of Friendship and trees and hills
Through wizard Walpole and you.

A PLEA FOR GLADNESS

The world is full of beauty and of love
Wherewith boon nature dowered us at birth,
Sunshine and fragrance, music, motion, mirth,
Gay flowers that dance to the blue sky above
And shall we then so all ungrateful prove
As 'mid such plenty sourly mourn some dearth?
Rich with the grace and loveliness of earth
Shall we aloof and wilful-blindly move?
Must dreams of some fond good we may not gain
Some gift that sets the moon and stars at naught,
Some farther sweet with flashing wonder fraught
Mock us with hopes we never may attain?
Teach us we are most blest when most content
With simplest joy and kindliest merriment.

KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL

I used to feel God never came so close
As where earth, sea and sky together met;
That no cathedral stones expectant set
Had caught and held him manifest as those;
Till this sweet shrine before my eyes arose,
Its soaring roof enriched by stony fret,
Its windows sprinkling blue and violet
Or steeping silver shafts in sifted rose.
Here reverent art and kneeling worship strove
To sanctify an aisle to Spirit free;
Here prayer and winged anthem interwove
Man's heart and God's love indivisibly.
Within these consecrated walls there dwell
Hope and aspiring Faith made visible.

MY BOOKS

I

The room is quiet in the failing light
Where stealthy shadows run about the floor,
And hide in dusky corners by the door
Waiting till evening deepens into night
To creep and spread and hurry into flight.
This is the hour when all my books ajar
Open their pages and from near, from far
My friends come crowding to my inner sight,
Rushing and swarming, gentle, loving, near,
Knowing I wait intent for each low voice
And whispered murmur that my heart can hear,
That stirs my pulse and cries "Dear Friend, rejoice,
Question and harken, we for you unroll
Ages of wisdom, loveliness of soul."

II

Here's one from that old volume ofttimes read:
To hear that voice, to sup that spring of truth,
I missed some ribbons, laces, dear to youth,
And laughed, "I go adorned in my head,
I'll wear dull homespun so my heart be fed,
Give me my Poets! I am robed forsooth
In royal purple." Here is one uncouth
Old tattered comrade; his brave coat of red
Faded to brown, discoloured with the rain.
If I could woo the hours back again
He charmed, I'd see the sunlight and the shade
Beneath the pines, beside the mystic sea,
I'd walk, a dryad in the forest glade,
And he would come and godlike speak with me.

III

Here comes that wizard Balzac with his train
So real to me I know not where truth ends
And where his fantasy begins. My friends
Modeste, the Curé, Medecin, I'm fain
To call them all. I see them. Here again
The other wizard, genial, kind and wise,
His Colonel Newcome and Pendennis rise
With all the breathing children of his brain.
And here is David Balfour flushed with youth
And rare bright Kirstie from her wind-swept heath,
And Richard Feverel and all the throng
That are more real to me than humdrum truth,
In crowding circles, from above, beneath,
Filling the room like a great choral song.

IV

And now my twilight loves are greeting me;
One leads his fair Dream Children by the hand,
The Brushwood Boy has searched across the sand,
And brings his Annieanlouise. I see
The Lantern-bearers, hiding each in glee
His smoking lantern, poets in the rough.
And "They" are hers and she has joy enough
Though their sweet forms are veiled in mystery.
With Peter Ibbetson I wander down
The old, accustomed, dear Parisian ways
And every Knight of great King Arthur's days
Gives battle with fierce blow and towering frown,
While Lily Maidens, Chiefs of high romance
And laughing fairies join in witching dance.

V

TREASURE TROVE

Who then are these that gently stand apart?
Not mine, these friends, not mine and yet how dear!
I slow caress, them feeling sharp and clear
The thrill that runs from fingertips to heart.
Their very presence does a grace impart
As if their first great lover lingered near,
And felt content to know them gathered here,
Safe from the haste and clatter of the mart;
Sheltered, adored, kind-cherished for his sake,
Honoured ambassadors whose slightest word
With reverent humility is heard
And my decision theirs to make or break.
Thus high-companioned and advised I go;
Time's feet may drag, they cannot move too slow.

THE VENETIAN PALACE

Night came and found us still delaying there
In quiet converse, high above the tide
Whence we had watched how sunset colours dyed
The slow clouds crimson, turned to coral fair
And faded into gray. You said, "I care
More for this hour, sped dreaming by your side
In our dear Venice, for our vision wide
Of floating palaces, and that bubble there,
Tender Salute, rising into air
A disembodied spirit; for the tales
Each lazy gondola has whispered; sails
Flying to port with some light-hearted care
Of haste to home or gay piazza's throng;
More, dear my friend, than for the rarest song."

SUGGESTED BY MACWHIRTER'S DRAWING
"TREMEZZO, LAGO DI COMO"

We walked by Como one glad afternoon,
Sauntering idly, held by the delight
Of all that beauty brimming to our sight,
Our gracious Mother's voice in sweetest tune,
With all the songs and harmonies of June,
Her mantle, white and rosy, flower-bedight,
Her lake thrown turquoise, till her mountain's height
Towered far purple. Twilight fell too soon
Upon our heedless footsteps. We had swung
From earth to heaven and all the clouds among
In our free musings on the way of things,
Unheld, unhampered, as a meteor swings
Across night's hollow, leaving but a path
Of blazing sparks,—like pleasure's after-math.

ORVIETO

The silver leaves of the blown olive trees
Were flung across a sky of summer blue.
Our road wound ever upward, passing through
The ancient city gates. In Sunday peace
We breathed the air of old faint mysteries.
Forgotten manners lived for us anew.
We gazed at the Cathedral where a crew
Of saints and angels in a coloured frieze
Above the tawny marble shone in gold,
Purple and crimson. Saw the fainter glow
Of Signorelli,—Fra Angelico,—
Within the portals, resting while you told
How, years before, on such another day
Wandering alone you came this selfsame way.

TO MATTHEW MARIS

Poet and dreamer, mystic laureate,
Colour you chose to set your vision free,
Pouring your verse in glowing harmony
Where light and feeling softly alternate,
Mingled in alchemy so intimate
We scarce can say our inner eye doth see,
Or ear can hear the subtle melody
That sharply eye and soul doth penetrate.
Gentle and clear your beauty strikes our sight
And yet so keen the message to our hearts
We hover 'twixt uncertainty of Arts,
Though no uncertain homage is your right,—
Whether you Painter most or Poet be,—
For visible song, and wordless poesy.

MY SAINTS

My Saints are near, my Saints are in the sky,
Ardent and finished, perfect in all grace,
Benign, serene, niched every one in place,
My Saints, not lost, set evermore on high,
Clear and triumphant to that inner eye
That sees adoring each beloved face
Shine down with sacred smile, wherein I trace
The old fond moments, unforget, and try
To catch the message that they strive to tell,
“Seek Patience, Worship, Love for all the earth,
Stars, flowers, and birds, sweet children, gentle
mirth,
And Love, wide Love. Love above all is well.”
My Saints, My Saints, why should I wish you here
While Faith doth see you and while heart doth hear?

IN MEMORIAM

S. K. L.

1829–1917

A crowned life, complete and beautiful.
A tranquil progress, simple and sublime,
Through girlhood, womanhood, to noble prime
And down the slope of years with honours full.
Her love sent out its slender binding threads
Drawing her children nearer to her side,
And children's children's children far and wide
Received her gentle blessing on their heads.
She strewed bright flowers all along her way,
Such melody from her swift fingers fell
And blossomed into roses: They could tell,
Whose hearts were gladdened in that garden gay.
We may not grieve her loss, nor murmur even,
On earth one less,—one more sweet soul in Heaven.

ON HEARING MOTHER READING ALOUD TO HERSELF

I heard a little murmuring fount of sound
Bubbling and running, crystal-clear and sweet,
Incessant, with the rhythmic fall and beat
Of happy water playing underground,
Then rising skyward with a single bound
Into the sun, where singing birds would greet
The pleasant music. Little dancing feet
Would seek its marge and children gather round
To chatter of their merry baby-play
And bind the pink-tipped daisies into crowns,
Or watch the sunbeams hiding in the spray
And weaving rainbows bright as elfin gowns.
A gentle fount, a fount of love and truth,
Fresh as the waters of Eternal Youth.

TO CONSTANCE

How can I tell you, dear, what you have done,
Making a world already sweet and fair
More lovely by your presence, and more rare
A wider heaven of stars, more radiant sun,
Two roses blossoming for every one
That erstwhile poured its fragrance through the air,
A richer choir of birds, a fuller share
Of Faith and Hope and Courage to be won.
Because you are, because you know, and see,
A farther vision spreads for my belief.
That you have gained, have suffered, have become,
Somewhat assures, somewhat emboldens me.
Chary of joy, and half in love with grief
I seek your path and cry, in hope, "I come!"

E. E. C. J.

The ardent spirit of a happy child
Enriched by garnered wisdom through the years
Flames bright within her. Laughter meets with
tears
In gentle fellowship, serene and mild.
Her loyalty and faith unwavering gain
True friends for her. Ever her hopes, her fears
Are spent for those she loves. 'Twould seem she
hears
God solve the mysteries of joy and pain
And walks apart in some sweet quiet place
Where spirit grows, safe-cloistered from all strife.
And yet she feels and grieves with tenderest grace
For others' woe, deep-wondering. Her life
Is a Spring garden filled with every flower
That heavenward smiles through sunshine and
through shower.

J. M. W.

Pale dusk is quivering with a stir of wings
Where one great moth shines silver 'gainst the sky
Hiding the first faint star, or fluttering by
Waits to caress my roses. Someone sings
Far off a happy evensong that rings
In long glad echoes, rising shrill and high,
Then sinking to a Mother's lullabye
That soothes and quiets little restless things.
Through the soft twilight glides a slender sprite,
Graceful and dancing, borne on flying feet;
With flitting smile and soft hand, fairy light
Lingers one moment my delight to greet,
Then vanishes from vision like a dream,
A petal floating down a silent stream.

L'ENFANCE DE JEANNE D'ARC

By REGINALD FRAMPTON

Rapt kneeling maiden whose ecstatic eyes
Dream-visioned, watch with soft, unfaltering gaze
The miracle which shakes you with amaze,—
Fair France in triumph crowned, exultant rise
Amid a nation's glad victorious cries
While you, slight maid, all humbly yet afame
Lead on the hosts,—forgetful how you came
This morning 'neath the silver-misty skies
Leading your sheep to pasture 'mid the flowers
Where you have prayed and watched through all the
hours
Till shadow night now finds you, kneeling still
Among the lilies on this little hill,
While your pale lantern spreads its lengthening rays
Like the faint presage of your radiant days.

TO E. B. B.

Th' immortal poignant beauty of your song
Startles my sense to sharp delight again
And pulses through me like a wave of pain,
Leaving me spent. My wreathed Priestess, long
You moved triumphant 'mid a pressing throng
Whose fainter chanting voices I was fain
To join; heart, spirit, eager brain
Bidding me venture, and my utmost wrong
To you, that I would gently touch your lyre
Striving to wake a soul in minor chords,
Through strings where your great fingers striking fire
That flashed to Heaven like bright flaming swords
Of melody, worked miracles that bless,
But mark for me my own pale littleness.

THOMAS CARLYLE

He read the stars to solve the fate of man,
And thundered truths that made wide Heaven quake,
And Earth's infirm foundations heave and shake,
Of man's immortal right since Time began
To work, to serve; through his allotted span
Obliterate himself that he may make
Sacrifice ever for another's sake
In worship of the higher Man who can.
Yet all his life he stumbled with blind feet
Through the bright beauty of his humble day,
To hungry waiting ears he did not say
The longed-for word, divine and simply sweet.
Intent on worlds to conquer, he forgot
The fair, true flower in his garden-plot.

TO H. J.

ON READING HUGH WALPOLE'S "GREEN MIRROR"

You loved him, welcomed him, would have him take
His place among the Immortals, held your hand
In friendship to his youth, for him you planned
High triumph; saw men apathetic, break
In sharp applause, responsive. For his sake
You dreamed old dreams, and seemed again to stand
On the bright threshold of your conquered land;
Throbbed with his pulse, with his young hope did
wake.

Now wise with all the wisdom of the spheres,
And rich in revelation, close, you still
Shed love around him and his striving fill
With your great benediction through the years,
And hastening down while all Parnassus hears
Your glad "Hail Master!" lead him up the hill.

**LA SALLE TAKES POSSESSION OF THE
MISSISSIPPI FOR KING LOUIS IN
1682**

From the high vantage of two centuries
We see your life enclosed within its span
Of finished days and deeds. For you began
The promise and the vision. Yours to seize
And wrest from Fate its opportunities
To serve your purpose. Baffled you began
Twice more your quest. Snows, forests, rivers ran
'Twixt you and your design, but scorning these,
Fearless, alone, you crossed a thousand leagues
'Neath hostile skies, midst savage enemies
Beset around with death and dark intrigues
As who at darkest hour his triumph sees.
Till, iron-hearted, hand unfaltering,
You seized a world as guerdon for your King.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

I meet your eyes great Master, and greater Friend,
Nor is there need of speech between us twain.
Your spirit falls on mine like gentle rain,
Washing it clean. I see no final end
Nor first beginning of the light you send,
As if your fire and truth you did attain
From God himself, instilled by love and pain
That on his gracious ministry depend.
You have pierced the mysteries of Time and Space,
And measured the abysses of deep life
Looking serenely on your Maker's face,
Appareled in Heaven's peace, apart from strife.
You show me wonders on the path of truth
Simpler than childhood or the grace of youth.

R. T. II

I long to walk in your accustomed way
Proud with your soft disdain of self, and free
With your obedience. Teach me to see
Life as you see it, day succeeding day
Each shining through a radiance mild, a ray
Of glowing love. I too would learn to be
Empty of hate. To bend to the decree
Of full renunciation. Will you say
“Follow my teaching well, you gain a friend
Whose hand will lead you gently up the hill.
Govern yourself. Curb your wild soul and will.
The night shall vanish at the summit’s end,
The universe will stretch beneath your feet,
Raise then your eyes th’ eternal light to greet.”

CONTENT

Deep peace and happiness have come to me.
The Everlasting Peace with brooding wings
Hovers above my spirit. In all things
Attuned to the exultant harmony
Of Life and Love, the world around I see
In perfect beauty,—flowers,—the flashing wings
Of happy birds, and how the cloud-drift flings
Its scarf against the blue, speak visibly
Of God's immense, unutterable plan
For me,—the last least atom in his world,—
Decided, wrought, e'er he created man
Or the first universal fragment hurled;
Knowing the paradox,—I am most free
When most my steps are led enforcedly.

DISCIPLINE

We mourn Life's cruelty,
And yet how wise
Each lesson leaves us.
Our blind souls cannot see
That power devise
Hurt that retrieves us.

Until we learn to bend
To Life's decrees,
We suffer ever;
But wiser in the end
Harsh pain we seize
To spur endeavour.

Knowing our human clay
Inclines to sloth
And languid ease,
We greet Life's sting and fray
To aid soul's growth,
Spirit's increase.

I pray that when the key
Of Time shall turn
Death's waiting lock,
Life's discipline for me
Will leave to learn
No final shock.

But fearless, armed, profound
May I advance
With eager tread.
What if, so proved, I found,
All pain perchance
Already dead?

YOUTH'S FALLACY

Triumphant Youth gazes across the flood
Of years, and throws a glance of smiling pity
Where Age, serene, seeks the Eternal City
Forgetful of Youth's pride, Youth's ardent blood,
Moving with statelier step in search of good,
To aid, enlighten, succor human need;
From Youth's desires and tempests gladly freed,
He sees Heaven's glory through no selfish cloud,
Nor looking back regrets the fading flowers
The songs and dances of his early day.
Courage and hope accompany his way;
Glad effort and achievement crown his hours;
He pays the price of wisdom with his youth,
And gains content, experience, and truth.

RENEWAL

My hopes are flashing a-wing to the stars
 And away
We fly to the furthermost edge of night
 But stay!
What is this clings and hampers us so?
 Alas!
Old sorrows, regrets, disappointments, all,
 That pass.
Shake them away, and hasten, Time presses!
 Fly on!
These cherished hours of striving, of flight
 Will be gone.
Fling off the years and the tears, the old desires,
 The sighs,
To-morrow is ours, to-morrow the sun
 Will rise!

MY MOOD

My mood is like a butterfly
That flits and woos a hundred flowers;
Or web of gossamer that glints
In rainbow changes through the hours.

It's like a cloud that sails the sky
And flies or lingers with the breeze;
Or like the scarlet pimpernels
That shut and open when they please.

The shadow of a darting trout
Moves more sedately than my mood.
The murmur of soft-stealing dusk
To its mild tenderness, is rude.

There could not be a gentler thing,
Nor wilder, fiercer, more untaught,
Of every contradiction formed
With pain and ecstasy enwrought.

I fought my mood through many days,
I fought and lost through sighing years,
My strange mood brought this gift to me
That laughter springs from fount of tears.

I'll take this wild mood by the hand
And walk with it where'er it list
Through crowded streets or forest ways
By shadow and by sunshine kissed.

My mood and I will just be friends,
Adown this latter slope of life,
Done with our doubts and our debates,
Our hesitations and our strife.

We'll sip the sweet of every flower,
And laugh with sunshine and with rain.
We'll love swift change and slow delay,
And sleep and happiness and pain.

My mood will cry "How this is sweet!"
"Ah! Sweet indeed!" I too will cry,
"And Life is good, and Death is good."
My mood will say, and so shall I.

TO MY WILFUL MUSE

Thou fairy flitting Spirit of Caprice,
That now dost fill my being with delight,
Now coy, dost vanish from my hungry sight,
Till, with my dwindling hope, my needs increase;
Leave me no more, nor let thy magic cease
To work enchantment on each daily sight,
Thou who canst bind a chain of jewels bright
From scattered blossoms, or, from murmuring trees
And tinkling waters conjure symphonies,
A ribbon favour from a rainbow weave,
And from a friendly voice an echo leave
That runs in musical, kind melodies
Down happy days. Without thee I am naught.
With thee, my soul in net of stars is caught.

THE MOTHERS SPEAK

We poured out our hearts at your bidding
And proudly we offered you then
The red wine of love and of sorrow,
Great Mother of Nations and men.

We sent our Beloved to guard you.
You took, nor considered our pain.
They returned to us wounded and broken;
There are those will return not again.

We taught them your story, O! Mother
When at twilight they stood at our knees,
Your honour, your glory, your service,
We bade them not falter from these.

By all the black hours they suffered,
By the lessons you taught to their youth,
You tried them and moulded and hardened,
And sent them forth girded with truth.

They have taken the measure of sorrow,
And sounded the ocean of pain,
They have looked in Death's face and defied
him,
They know that their loss has been gain.

So, Mother, we grudge not our anguish,
For you did we ward them and rear,
To be yours, yours with uttermost striving,
To serve you, Great Mother, Most Dear.

LORD KITCHENER

You drew your sword in England's name
And for your King made victory sure,
Fearless to strike, firm to endure
For Right, nor knew another aim.
High-crested, stern, where'er you came,
You plucked new laurels for a crown
And carelessly you tossed them down,
Nor saw them, how they burst in flame
Of love and honour round your feet,
Where men would follow to the death,
Or leaping forward, at a breath,
A sign from you, their fate would greet,
Glad at your word to fight, to die,
Your name their banner through Eternity.

FOR F. G. F.

You walked on Vimy ridge while overhead
You heard our shells fly screaming for their prey:
Nor could your eyes follow their rushing way
So swift in ravening search their flight was sped.
You saw them fall to swell the toll of dead
Where the white line of German trenches lay,
And marked them burst in a dark cloud of spray
Where life and pain their fearful hunger fed.
You passed huge craters that the battle tore,
And saw the bones of the shell-tortured earth
Chalk-white with presage of eternal dearth,
Where thousands died, where suffered thousands
more.
You draw the picture and we seem to stand
Beside you in that worn and wasted land.

R. L. L. C.

DIED OF WOUNDS IN MESOPOTAMIA,

Dec. 18, 1916

I hold his slender missive in my hand,
A friendly word to bring us Christmas cheer,
Wafted as if by magic power here,
Past perils of storm and foe by sea and land;
Words written there beside the desert sand,
While thoughts of home, and friends, and England
dear

Filled the young heart where was no place for fear,
And life seemed simple, not sublime nor grand.

I think of how he lies so very still,
Released from war's huge turmoil and its pain,
Careless of youth, hope, energy and will,
And conscious only of revealing gain,
As if a door had opened to the light,
And he had left behind the world's dark night.

TO A. C.

ESCAPED FROM GERMANY, JUNE, 1917

With youth's undaunted faith in splendid Fate
He took his life in calm adventurous hands,
Broke the invisible yet hateful bands
That fettered him. Slipt past the prisoning gate,
And crossed a raging land beset with foes.
Sped noiseless over rivers in the dark,
Through moors and forests, compassed to his mark
By the half-laughing courage that o'erthrows
Fear and its fellow, doubt. Braving dismay,
He swam with eager strokes a lazy stream,
Till freedom shone before him like a dream,
While daylight mocked where heather-hid he lay.
Then in one swift, exultant dash beneath the night
He reached the goal of his triumphant flight.

TO A. C.

FOR TWO YEARS AND EIGHT MONTHS A PRISONER
OF WAR IN GERMANY. ESCAPED JULY, 1917

His young, free spirit mocked at keys and bars
And cried "How turn this mischief to account?
Make this my ladder whereupon I mount
Till I can breathe clear air beneath the stars?
My heart's not captive. No denial mars
My thought. What fair adventure may I count
New heights to conquer? How may I surmount
This flimsy barrier? In what winged cars
Shall I set forth defying Time and Space
To seek new knowledge? Here's a gift of tongues.
Here's skill in fence. Of these I'll make the rungs
I'll climb. Here's colour, beauty, grace
Remembered, loved." Meeting with quiet eyes
Outrageous Fate, she taught him how to rise.

YOUTH

I met a boy that was in love with life.
"For life is keen," he said, "and sweet to live.
No goodlier favour could Bright Fortune give,
Than send me safe from this most hellish strife."
Now this fair boy was out of love with love.
"For love," he said, "is but a witless thing
That steals the joy from life and leaves a sting."
I breathed a flying prayer to powers above,
For he was all on fire with flaming youth;
His eager heart awing with beating life;
His eyes were clear and blue, his lips were rife
With undreamed kisses, and his soul was truth.
If life and love and he together meet,
May love, than life prove dearer and more sweet.

June, 1917.

JANUARY 15, 1918

**FOR ME, AN HISTORIC ENCOUNTER WITH A YOUNG
SOLDIER JUST BACK ON A FOURTEEN DAYS'
LEAVE**

He said, "I was at Cambrai in a tank,"
"Yes, in the last big scrap. We took their line,
Part of the famous Hindenberg, you know.
Why, in one place there was a flight of steps,
Sixty, that led straight down into the earth;
And rooms were there, all dry and lined with wood,
Bells, and electric light. Oh! Everything
You'd dream for comfort. They were settled there
To spend the winter, but they scuttled off
When we came over. Left all sorts of things
They hurried so, food on the plates untouched,
Meat, bread and jam, funny it was to see;
And stores of stuff. We captured lots of things.
How did they manage their return surprise?
Oh! In the old way. We were confident.
Too sure,—we always are,—and tried to hold
The line with half a handful of our men,
And we, worn out for sleep,—in fourteen days
You understand, there'd been no breathing-space,—
Were all asleep. Fritz dropped some big ones round
And we half woke. My mate said "Carry on!"
And turned upon his other side and slept.
Then came our orders. We were to retire.
I tell you we were sick and mad enough

To have to give back all that hard-won ground.
We got back safe? Oh! Yes, we got back safe;
We lost no men but stores and stores of stuff
More than you know. Red Cross, a heap of that,
And ammunition too, and our supplies.
~~But what I say about the whole bad thing,~~
Is, we shall never, ~~never beat the Boche,~~
Nor he beat us, through half a hundred years.
He's organized away ahead of us,
The least detail is all worked out with him.
And this,—If people over here could know
Just what it's like. If they could go and see
And satisfy themselves of everything,
I tell you that this war would have to end.”

Jan. 18, 1918.

or

JANUARY FIRST, 1918

A wind came up at midnight
And blew across the wold
With little gasping pauses,
Sharp-edged with stinging cold.

The New Year stood before me
Shrinking and sad and gray,
A little wistful figure
That longed to run away.

Old, tired, mournful Last Year
Crept off into the gloom,
Spake in complaining whisper
"Twas not my fault, but doom.

"I saw my morning open
With faith in better things;
I prayed for peaceful ending
To my sad wanderings.

"Have pity on this infant
Who comes so fearful in;
Pray God to grant in mercy
He may not pass in sin.

"By your own firm endeavour
To trust in Peace and Right
You help to clear the error
That shrouds the world in night.

“ Look on my grievous sorrow
For all my weary days
Before I go forever
Into oblivion’s haze.

“ I longed to make you happy,
I longed to make you wise.
I spread my fairest treasures
Before your blinded eyes.

“ You watched black death and battle
Sweep down my lovely fields,
Where every trampled acre
Harvest of horror yields.

“ You stopped your ears in torment
To Christ’s forgiving word,
‘All children of one Father,’
He spake, but who hath heard?

“ You saw your tired brothers
Faint with dark wounds return.
But you were unrelenting
‘Fight on, we may not turn,

“ One faith, one hope, one purpose,—
To clear the world of wrong.’
You said, nor will you waver
From that great battle song.

“ But as the surging tumult
Is by your own decree,
Pity the Years you live in.
In mercy, pity me.

“And to this frightened creature
Who follows in my place
Grant in your heart some measure
Of tenderness and grace.

“ Rejoice in light and colour
Wherewith he bathes the world;
Look at the dower of beauty
In budding petals curled.

“ Listen to all the chorus
Of joy and hope and love
That springs from earth around you,
That falls from skies above.

“ The magic of the morning,
The triumph of the day,
The promise of rich harvest,
From thrusting spears of May;

“ Nor judge too harsh my Brother,
Born now to be your friend,
Intent to bless and aid you
Unchanging to the end.”

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